585 The following morning the new wife returns to the hut of her "mother." She is summoned by her husband several nights in a row before he resumes the practice of receiving each wife in turn.

The Bride Price. The Basket of the Fiancée

583 Bride price. Mossi custom does not require a bride price. The one thousand to several thousand cowries that are required, depending on the man's resources, plus chickens, a sheep and beer, are not a bride price, properly speaking, or "selling a daughter." Nothing is asked which could not be repaid one day without too much difficulty.

585 The fiancée's basket. The basket of the fiancée contains the girl's clothes, some soap, some karite butter, some cowries, gourds, and ladles. The basket is carried by one of the women in the cortege.

The cortege. The fiancée's cortege is usually composed of a young girl, a woman who has borne children, and a boy.

They proceed to the house of the village elder. [182] The relatives of the bridegroom provide food for them for several days. Finally, they are given a farewell dinner consisting of baskets of millet cakes and mutton, goat, or merely some chickens. They are also given cowries.

585 In addition to these gifts, the sum of 444 or 1,400 cowries (the
431 "virginity price") is sewn into a sack and sent to the girl's mother. If the bride was given by a chief, he is entitled to from 2,000 to 3,000 cowries if the husband is an ordinary Moaga, 10,000 to 50,000 cowries if the husband himself is a naba. In this last case, the women in the cortege receive skirts, and the boy, a robe.

585 Note. While it is true that among many peoples a girl goes to her
152 husband joyfully, it is quite the contrary in Mossi country. There is a real struggle to separate the girl from her parents. Many lose sleep and their appetites. On the day of departure they weep bitterly, and those who do not are insulted by the old women.

181 /109/ The Mossi have passions, and they are the same as ours:
152 ambition, jealousy, gluttony, sloth, lust, and sometimes even avarice, though more rarely. All of these reign among them. Because they cannot control their emotions, cannot resist their evil inclinations, these passions become tyrannical as they grow older. The children are usually quite malleable. The spirit of obedience and complete submission to their parents is instilled into them from such an early age that when taken sufficiently young their character can be trained and they become capable of truly virtuous actions which cost them an effort. When left to themselves, however, they listen only to their own desires and seek out whatever can bring them some satisfaction. This is rather similar to the morality of a slave who fears only the whip.

The Mossi are vain and easily offended by a word they have misunderstood, even when spoken in jest. The practice of humility is far from being one of their habitual pursuits. The Mossi are quarrelsome and testy, especially when they have drunk a little more millet beer than they should have. There are no festivities and few markets of any importance where a quarrel does not arise among some natives, often for no better reason than because someone is jostled in the crowd. The brawl begins with insults, proceeds with clubs, and ends up with knives. No one gives way. A Mossi who gave way in a quarrel would feel dishonored. The man who gives in proves that he is the weakest, and at the first opportunity someone who witnessed the incident will insult him in turn. Why not, since he does not defend himself? This is why a Mossi who has been abused will give in only at the final extremity, especially if his father and mother were insulted, and all cursing soon gets to this point. When drawn apart, the opponents keep up their invectives at a distance. An angry Mossi loses all control. A quarrel often has its aftermath. The Mossi are spiteful, and, especially if they were placed in the weaker position, they will seek revenge in one way or another, so it cannot be said that they got the worst of it.

181 Not only do the Mossi have passions like ours, but like us they also
157 have their temperaments. There are the lymphatic ones, languid and incapable of any effort; there are the nervous people who are always in motion, sensitive to a fault, who weep at the slightest remark; there are the taciturn ones who almost never laugh, who think that no one loves them and that everyone wants to hurt them, who like solitude and

586 As for the other causes of divorce, they occur very rarely, more rarely than the above.

Formalities of divorce. —"There are none," says Vadier. "The husband informs the head of his family and his wife's father of the decision he has taken. Likewise, the wife tells her father and the head of her family.

"If the divorce is contested and things do not work out amicably, the naba intervenes and remains the supreme judge."

Consequences of divorce. —1. Concerning property. "Each spouse," says Vadier, "keeps his or her own property." We have seen in the preceding paragraphs what happened in each case to the gifts given to the wife by her husband.

"As concerns the gifts given by the husband to the girl's family head or mother, there is no possibility of their return under any circumstances.

"2. Concerning the spouses. The spouses are completely freed by the divorce. They no longer have any obligations toward each other. /249/

"They may later marry each other again.

"3. Concerning the children. An important principle settles this question. The children belong to their father and consequently must remain with him.

"Small children accompany the mother, but they must return and live with their father when they reach the age of three (for boys) or six or seven (for girls).

"The divorced woman cannot return to her husband's hut to see her children. She may, however, go to the home of the head of her husband's family where her children may meet her with her husband's permission. The naba can override the father's authorization.

"With paternal consent, the children may go and see their mother at her home."

As Vadier has stated, an important principle governs the consequences of divorce as far as the children are concerned. As among most Sudanese populations, they revert to the father. He married in order to have children. The wife may go away and escape her basic function as generatrix for the husband, as generatrix for the husband's benefit, but the children remain with him. This matter is very important and deserves to be duly noted.

152 Psychology of the women. The woman as lover and as mother. — Mossi women love their children better than their husband. As for

152 their family, they love it very much, but they love their husband just as much if they love him at all. If they do not love their husband, naturally they love their family infinitely more.

304 833 When we study the children's life, we shall see that Mossi girls are excised at the age of nine or ten. This barbarous operation naturally removes an important part of a woman's sensual sensitiveness. The Negress is thus a generatrix rather than a lover. One cannot say of her as of the Latin poet's mistress: crispum ... docta movere latus /gracefully moving her slender body/. She is passive in love and content to give herself without resistance to the man's passion.

831 577 The morality of Mossi women is certainly laxer than that of European women. (Naturally, I compare the Mossi woman to the respectable woman of our occidental societies.) We saw earlier that the breach of virginity prior to marriage was not unusual and was tolerated with considerable leniency by custom. Adultery is also frequent and is punished in crude and rustic fashion. The woman is beaten and then forgiven. In short, morals are certainly less rigid [548] than in our own countries. On the other hand, prostitution does not exist, and this is a great moral advantage. Briefly, the division of labor in the sexual domain, as in other domains, is far less developed among the Mossi of Yatenga than among the highly evolved civilizations of our European and occidental countries. The same applies to the other Sudanese populations.

000 Now we turn to Children and Education. We shall discuss these matters in the following order. /250/

1. Filiation.
2. Theory of birth.
3. How children are welcomed.
4. Abortion.
5. Childbirth.
6. Baptism.
7. Freaks. Twins.
8. Nursing.
9. Charms for children and tattooings.
10. Children's games.
11. Familial education.
12. Education of children among themselves. Societies.
13. Young people's tasks.
14. Rights and duties of parents toward their children.
15. Duties of children toward their parents.